

Note—Members of the Congressional Hispanic Conference submitted this editorial in defense of Circuit Court nominee Miguel Estrada, which ran March 17 in the Wall Street Journal. The conference members' photos are below, along with Mr. Nunes.



Rep. Henry Bonilla,
R-Texas



Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart,
R-Florida



Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart,
R-Florida



Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen,
R-Florida

Hispanic Conference fights for Estrada

The Democratic filibuster against federal appellate court nominee Miguel Estrada has been nothing less than a partisan assault on the goal of achieving diversity in our nation's high-

est public institutions. Fewer than 4% of federal judges are Hispanic, yet 44 Senate Democrats, who run on "diversity" platforms have so far employed parliamentary procedures to thwart diversity and obstruct the confirmation of an eminently well-qualified lawyer through the use of double standards – standards they never applied to other nominees.

These Democrats, who credit themselves with helping advance minorities to high government positions, now prevent the first Hispanic from serving on our nation's second highest court by blocking the bipartisan majority that wants an honest up or down vote. The hypocrisy hurts America's largest minority group and strikes at the core of the American Dream.

One of the most offensive aspects of the opposition to the nomination of Mr. Estrada is the notion put forth by some Hispanic Democrats and leftist activist groups that he is "Hispanic in name only" – that because he is a mainstream lawyer, he doesn't represent the Hispanic community. Are we truly willing to exclude our accomplished minorities on the grounds that they have not pigeonholed their careers by focusing on one racial community? The suggestion jeopardizes the future of other qualified Hispanics because of unacceptable ideological bars. But

apparently Democrats believe that they alone should get to decide what a "Hispanic" should be.

We wish Mr. Estrada's plight were a novelty, but we are concerned that it is just one manifestation of a pervasive and troubling trend whereby the advancement of minorities is only applauded when it reinforces liberal politics. To counter this trend and to allow for the positive advancement of Hispanics in the U.S., the Hispanic Republican members of Congress are announcing with this article the formation of the Congressional Hispanic Conference.

The new Hispanic Conference will promote policy outcomes that serve the best interests of Americans of Hispanic and Portuguese descent and thereby all Americans. In this endeavor we are pledged to place principle above partisanship on issues directly affecting the betterment of the Hispanic and Portuguese communities.

A key goal of the Hispanic Conference is to promote principles that are of real importance to Hispanics and Portuguese in the U.S. These include the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, the emerging common market of this hemisphere's democracies; tax relief to American families by eliminating the death tax and marriage penalty and bringing relief to more than two million Hispanic-owned small businesses; the support of faith-based initiatives; and educational choice for all.

In the case of judicial nominees, the Hispanic Conference is committed to ensuring that only the best qualified nominees are ap-



Rep. Devin Nunes is Vice Chairman of the newly formed Congressional Hispanic Conference.

pointed to our federal courts.

As we enter another week of extra-constitutional procedural tactics aimed at blocking Mr. Estrada's confirmation, it is clear to us that there is a significant need for the formation of the new Hispanic Conference. We support the nomination of Mr. Estrada, not only because his superb credentials make him an ideal appointee, but also because – for so many of us who are the sons and daughters of immigrants – Mr. Estrada's story represents the American promise.

To block his confirmation is not only a dangerous constitutional precedent, but also one whose impact could forever alter that promise – that there is no limit to the possibility of success in America. We must not put a ceiling on the American dream, and so we join our voices as the new Congressional Hispanic Conference. We can think of no more appropriate first act than to champion Mr. Estrada's confirmation and to defend the reason we all came here.